THE NAVAL SAFETY CENTER'S AVIATION MAGAZINE

# approach

February 2000

## Rescuing the People at Home

## My First Blue-Angel Landing

## TomHawk or SeaCat

# approach

**The Naval Safety Center's Aviation Magazine**
**February 2000** Volume 45, No. 2
**On the Cover** A T-45A of TW-2. Photo by Ted Carlson.

**RAdm. Skip Dirren, Jr.** **Commander, Naval Safety Center**
**Bill Mooberry** **Deputy Commander**
**John G. Mahoney** **Head, Media Department**
**Derek Nelson** **Editor-in-Chief**
**LCdr. Mark Enderson** **Head, Graphics Division**

**Approach Staff** (757) 444-3520 (DSN 564)
**Peter Mersky** **Editor**
pmersky@safetycenter.navy.mil Ext. 7257
**John W. Williams** **Illustrator**
jwilliams@safetycenter.navy.mil Ext.7250
**Allan Amen** **Graphics and Design**
aamen@safetycenter.navy.mi Ext7248
**Yvonne Dawson** **Graphics and Design**
ydawson@safetycenter.navy.mi Ext7252
**Evelyn Odango** **Graphics and Design**
eodango@safetycenter.navy.mi Ext7255
**Patricia A. Eaton** **Graphics and Design**
peaton@safetycenter.navy.mi Ext7254

**Ginger Rives** Distribution (Magazines and Posters)
vrives@safetycenter.navy.mil Ext. 7256
**Letters and Articles** Commander, Naval Safety Center
Attn: Approach, Code 712
375 A St., Norfolk, VA 23511-4399
**Publications FAX** (757) 444-6791

**Cdr. Kimball Thompson** **Aircraft Operations Division**
ethompson@safetycenter.navy.mil Ext. 7203
**LtCol. Thomas Meyers** **Aircraft Mishap Investigation Division**
tmeyers@safetycenter.navy.mil Ext. 7236
**Capt. James Fraser** **Aeromedical Division**
jfraser@safetycenter.navy.mil Ext. 7228
**Homepage address** www.safetycenter.navy.mil
**NAVSAFECEN BBS** (757) 444-7927 DSN 564

Postmaster Send address changes to *Approach*, Code 74,
Naval Safety Center, 375 A Street,
Norfolk, VA 23511-4399

*Approach* (ISSN 1094-0405) is published monthly by the Commander, Naval Safety Center, 375 A Street, Norfolk, VA 23511-4399. *Approach* contents should not be considered directive and may not be construed as incriminating under Article 31 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Views expressed in guest-written articles are not necessarily those of the Naval Safety Center. *Approach* is available for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Subscription price: $36 per year. Telephone credit card orders can be made 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time at (202) 512-1800. Periodicals postage paid at Norfolk, VA and additional mailing offices.

# features

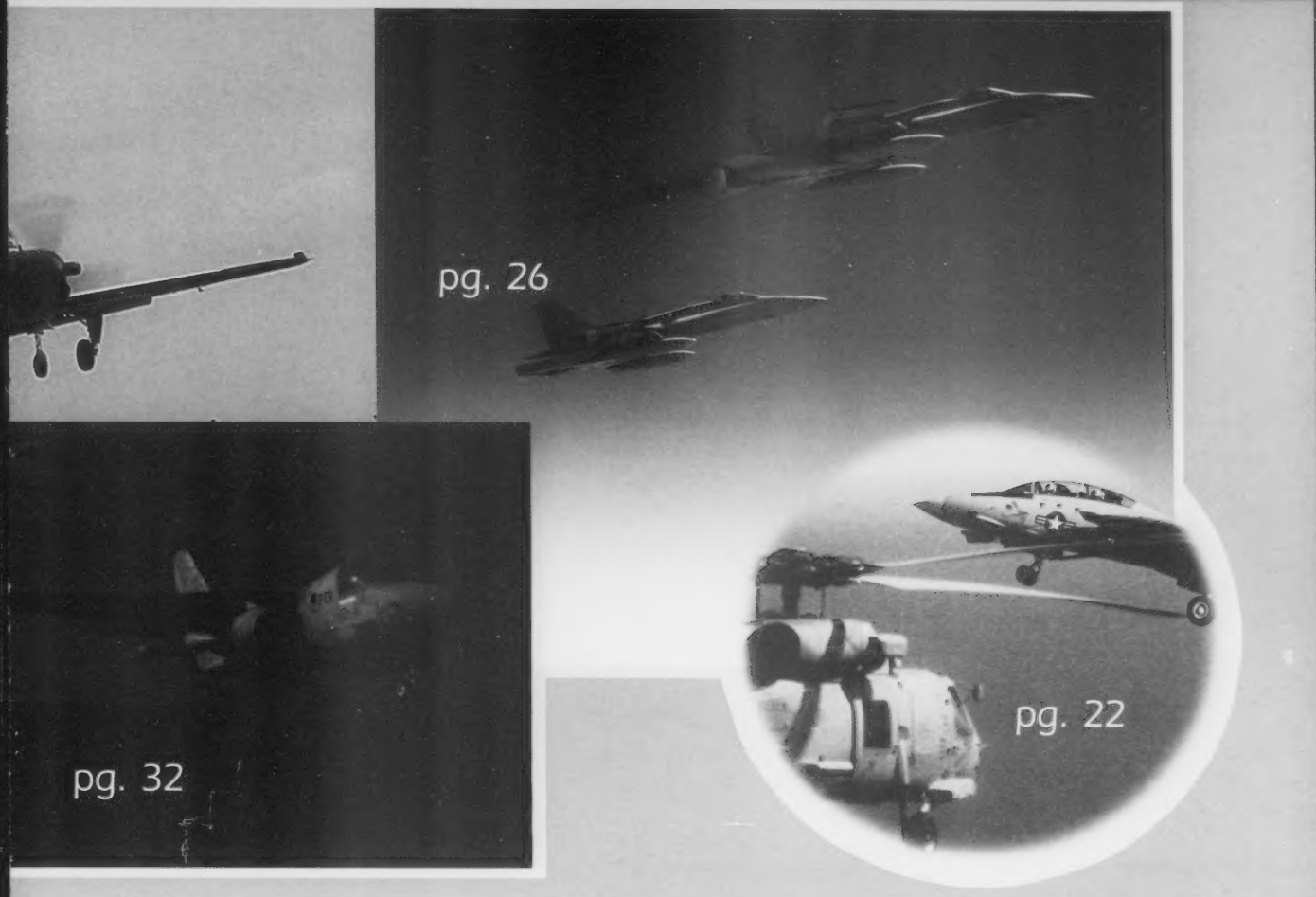
2 **Rescuing the People at Home**
- *NAS Oceana SAR*
- *HC-2*
- *VAW-78*

The helicopter rescue operation of hurricane victims in North Carolina presented unique situations and valuable lessons learned—for the next time.

6 **My Dad Was Right**
*2ndLt. Barton O'Brien*
An IP and SNA have an inflight emergency on the student's first flight.

8 ***My Flight With Christine***
*LtCol. Jesse G. Evans*
A Cobra crew fights the weather on a cross-country, starting with a takoff complicated by birds and fog.

12 **One Last Night Trap**
*Lt. Doug Cochran*
An FA-18 driver has a bad night behind the ship.




20 **We Almost Made a TomHawk, or a SeaCat!**
*Lt. Gabe Soltero*

22 **Tomcat in the Break, Seahawk on Final**
*LCdr. Scott Wolfe*
Two stories of near-misses involving H-60s and F-14s near the boat.

24 **My First Blue-Angel Landing**
*Ltjg. Charles Paquin*
*A student in a T-45 makes a formation landing with his instructor in the other trainer.*

26 **It's Good To Be Dash 2**
Lt. Chris Maslowski
A JO's got a problem–an inflight engine fire! But the shippers's flying wing.

30 **Do What I Say, Not What I Do**
*Ltjg. Paul Kesler*
A senior aviator doesn't follow his own instructions and flies without strapping in.

32 **Generator Failure Off Cat 4**
*Lt. Matthew Boyle*
This S-3 crew has an electrical failure during a night cat shot.

# departments

19 **Air Wing Milestones**

Back Cover **Brownshoes in Action**

Center-spread **Bravo Zulu**
–MAWTS-1
–VT-2
–VAQ-137

23 **Letters**

*Photo by Kevin Elliott,* The Virginian-Pilot

# Rescuing the People at Home: Navy SAR in Hurricane Floyd

**When the storm dumped nearly 20 inches of rain – on top of more than 10 inches from Hurricane Dennis barely two weeks before – on eastern North Carolina and southern Virginia, local resources were quickly overwhelmed. People and property were in great danger, and there was little time to rescue them. Accounts of the suffering filled the nightly television newscasts. Military squadrons and their crew put their training and efforts toward helping their neighbors at home.**

**The call went out, and like many groups, Tidewater Navy organizations responded. The following articles describe how these unlikely partners came together to bring people literally out of the flood. They had to fly in terrible conditions, in situations they were not directly trained for as fleet SAR units.**

**This was not search-and-rescue under fire, but it was finding and retrieving people under extreme physical and emotional stress. It was, some would say, one of the Navy's finest hours in recent years, and it was done for the home folks.**

# Oceana SAR

by Cdr. Kimball Thompson,
with LCdr. Mike Pampalone and Lt. Mike Ruehring

I was the duty HAC for the Neptune Festival Air Show and had anticipated flying a couple of photo-ex missions, looking at static displays, and watching the show. But when I arrived early Friday afternoon, I discovered that the previous crew was flying Deliverance 965 near Tarboro, N.C., rescuing flood victims. The returning crew told us how they rescued 39 people.

When they had arrived on station, the on-scene commander was a Coast Guard C-130, whose controller told the Oceana crew to land at the designated landing zone for tasking. A Coast Guard representative showed them a road map spread on the hood of a car. The helo crew then launched on the first of many SAR efforts that morning: a family trapped by rising floodwaters in the hayloft of their barn northeast of Rocky Mount, N.C.

Finding the barn was hard. They had only local aviation maps and charts, and their small scale wasn't suitable for overland SAR. They managed to find the barn within 10 minutes by flying in the general direction given by the Coast Guard rep.

The crew made a quick sweep of the area and determined that the front of the barn was the only access into the structure. Four feet of water, with a strong current, covered the ground floor. Submerged farm vehicles surrounded the barn.

The family waved to the H-3 from the hayloft door. The Navy crew decided the rescue swimmer would have to swim to the barn and coax the family into the rescue basket. He carried an infant, a toddler, four adults, and a Chihuahua through the flood waters to the rescue basket, cutting himself on submerged barbed wire and fencing in the process.

A trip to the LZ for drop-off, a quick refuel, and the crew responded to a call for available units needed to pull victims from a flooded gas station just north of Rocky Mount. Power lines surrounded the station, and the only clear area for hoisting was dangerously close to a relay tower. They positioned the helicopter within 5 feet of support wires to the tower; one set 5 feet directly in front, one set running down the left side of the aircraft. The power lines were 10 to 15 feet below them and slightly aft of the hoisting station. Despite dangerous currents and debris, the swimmer transferred all six men from the water to the helicopter with the help of some superb helicopter positioning by the first crewman.

The next day, when we arrived on station, I was pleased to find that the Coast Guard C-130 had us check in with Slug 02, an E-2 Hawkeye from VAW-78. From the Hummer point of view, I suspect that controlling a dozen Navy, Marine, Coast Guard, National Guard, and civilian EMS helicopters, all at very low altitude, all trying hard to help, was like herding cats. With discrete squawks, periodic ops-normals, and centralized tasking, the E-2 crew substantially improved what would have been a hazardous and confusing situation.

Our initial tasking was the "search" part of SAR to check flooded areas for people who might still be trapped. If you take the typical rural neighborhood, add 15 feet of water, and shake vigorously, you get an idea of the scene. Dark, murky water with mud, sewage, submerged house trailers, cars, floating propane tanks, stumps, and logs covered by a sheen of petroleum.

We discussed how we would deploy the swimmer or corpsman, depending on the situation, using our standard confined-area landing procedures to get us into and out of confined-area hovers or confined-area

landings. If anyone felt uncomfortable, they would just call, "Wave it off," and we'd depart and reassess.

After searching the flooded town, someone suggested we have a deputy sheriff help us with local geography. He was available for pickup at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). We landed at the local high school and learned it was the evacuee drop-off point, not the EOC. We were told, "Go north on the main road, then turn left at the railroad tracks and land next to the prison. You can get your deputy there."

We were assigned a search area of flooded neighborhoods. More dark water and more floating and submerged vehicles, houses, and pieces of wood. With the help of the local fire chief and the E-2 controller orbiting high above us, we located a pregnant woman about to deliver and flew her to a nearby hospital.

We train for relatively well-defined missions, usually involving a warfare specialty, and missions in support of national interests. Our standard SAR scenario is an over-water ejection by military aviators. We also practice confined-area landings and other over-land SAR missions, but we don't expect to use those skills.

In this case, two NAS Oceana SAR crews, as well as crews from other services and other communities, found themselves providing direct support to the taxpayers. See-and-avoid, as well as crew coordination, was essential. We had to constantly assess the risk to our crew versus the gain acquired from a rescue or humanitarian support. Sometimes, the training you considered secondary becomes primary for a long period of time and under unusual circumstances.

Cdr. Thompson is head of the Naval Safety Center's Aircraft Operations Division, and LCdr. Pampalone and Lt. Ruehring are assigned to Oceana SAR.

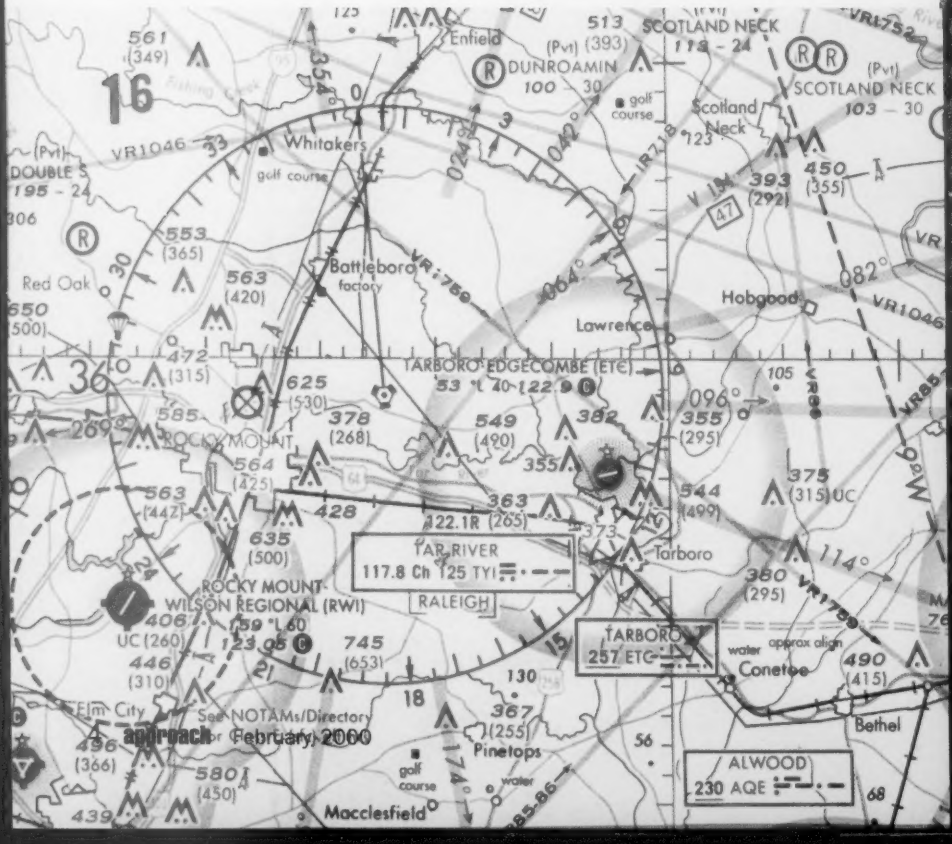
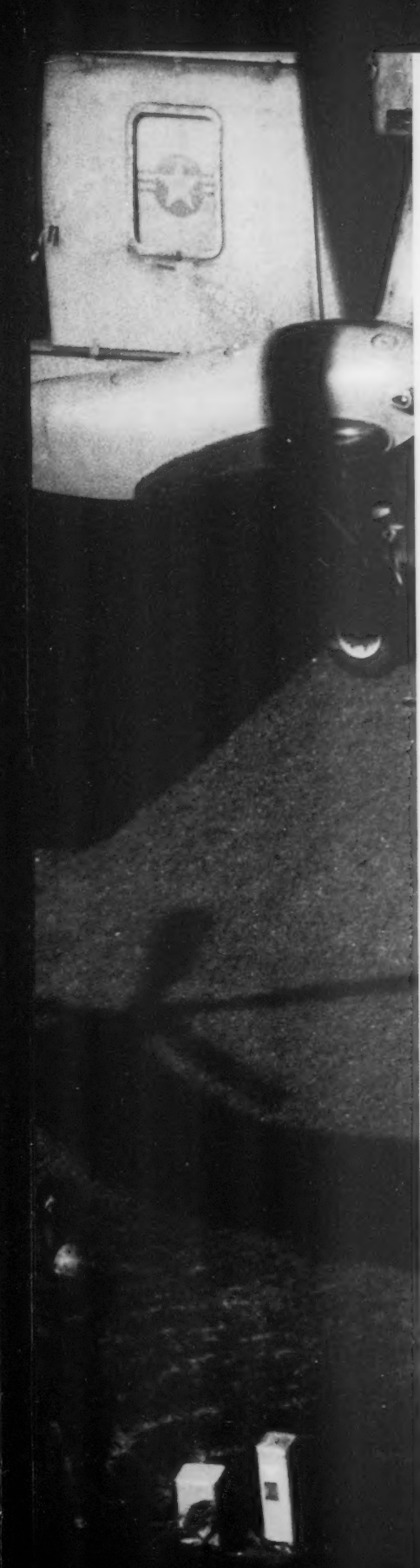


Photo by Kevin Elliott, The Virginian-Pilot



# The Fleet Angels

The hard-working crews of HC-2 enjoyed international media coverage, but the publicity wasn't a factor for them as they spent a week over the flood.

by Ltjg. Andrew Severson

For six days, HC-2, as part of a joint military effort, provided search and rescue relief to the hundreds of families trapped by the flooding Tar River. Using UH-3Hs, the squadron accounted for nearly 300 rescues, approximately one of every six people rescued by air units. Navy units rescued about a third of the flood victims.

As Floyd approached the eastern seaboard, HC-2 was tasked with several mission requirements. Eight aircraft and more than 100 people were deployed when the storm hit. Two days later, the hurricane left a large area in northeastern North Carolina under 9 feet of water.

Given the limited number of aircrew available, it was clear that experience would determine the success of the missions. There would be some difficult decisions ahead that required veteran pilots.

The rescues had to be made between obstacles, below power lines, and in deep, rushing waters. The possibility of a midair collision or hitting an obstruction was always a factor; at times, more than 20 rescue helicopters were flying in the same area. The helicopters were operating near their maximum weight capacities, and space was limited.

The two aircrewmen were positioned to see out each side of the helo. The pilots' attention was divided between navigating, searching, and monitoring aircraft performance.

The pilots made passes to identify obstacles and find approaches. Every trailer park in North Carolina seemed to be under power lines and surrounded by 75-foot trees. Closer to the ground were mazes of buildings, billboards, smaller trees, more power lines, and antennas. The UH-3H has 100 feet of hoist cable, but at that altitude, it was too hard for the crew chief to find his target.

The HAC sometimes decided that a low hover, under the power lines and between the obstacles, was the best bet, and the crew discussed the approach. The H-3, like all tail-rotor helicopters, must be pointed roughly into the wind to ensure stability. Otherwise, the aircraft might yaw unexpectedly, with changes in tail-rotor efficiency.

The pilots can only see ahead or to the sides; they must follow the crew chief's calls to keep from fouling the main rotor, tail boom or wheels. During the flood, for example, the crew chief verbally maneuvered the helo into recovery zone, the tail tucked neatly between a tree and an antenna, the rotor just feet from cables. The copilot kept one hand on the engine controls while the pilot made small inputs to maintain their exact position.

Once in position, the rescue swimmer descended on the hoist, explained to the frightened, shiver-

continued on page 28

Mark Cole

By 2ndLt. Barton O'Brien

When I started flight school few months ago, my father, a former naval aviator, told me, "Never think that it can't happen to you, because it can. And don't get into the mindset that it's always going to be the other guy." The *it* my father was speaking of was an in-flight emergency, or worse, a crash. It would not take long for me to find out just how right he was.

After months of ground school, swimming tests, dunkers, and more ground school, the day of my first flight finally came. There was a low ceiling at Whiting Field that morning, but things were clear in the area that we would be doing most of our flying in. Because my instructor was going to be doing most of the flying on my introductory flight anyway, he filed an IFR flight plan out to the area and away we went.

The flight itself went well. I was all over the sky, but according to my instructor, that is standard for Familiarization Flight 1. I felt good as we headed home. I had gotten a feel for how to trim the airplane, and I recognized most of the landmarks in the area. Most importantly, I was headed home with an empty barf bag. Victory!

We entered IFR conditions again about 10 miles from Whiting. We were at 1,700 feet with an overcast ceiling below us at 850 feet, and another above us at 2,200 feet. All was going smoothly until we got within seven miles of the field. That's when our master-caution light started blinking. I noticed it right away and keyed the ICS to

report it to my instructor (I was convinced he had figured out a way to turn it on just to see what I would do). But, before I could get a word out, he said, "Uh-oh, you see that chip light?" I looked down and saw the yellow chip light on the annunciator panel. He immediately went into his emergency procedures, and I realized that this was not one of the dirty instructor tricks I had heard so much about, but an actual emergency!

My instructor lost no time getting out a "PAN" call, and before I really knew what was going on, he was telling me what secondary indications of engine failure to look for. Once I caught up with him and figured out where he was in the emergency procedure, all the expected secondaries kicked in, and a couple unexpected ones, too.

We were able to climb to about 2,100 feet without breaking the ceiling above us. By the time we reached four miles out, I could smell burning oil fumes in the cockpit. My instructor had me put on my oxygen mask, and he began to point out all the secondaries to me. "Look," he said, "erroneous torque indications. You see that needle moving?" I could hear the excitement in his voice. "You feel those engine surges?" As the engine started to surge and sputter we started to lose altitude, and I noticed the torque needle bouncing from one extreme to the other.

At this point I realized the severity of our situation. I checked the DME and remembered the glide-distance equation from ground school. I did the math in my head. . .this one was going to be close. Doing a PEL into Whiting Field would normally be no problem for any instructor, but we were restricted as to how high we could climb to make the field, and we could not see anything through the clouds below us.

Despite having the power-control lever at idle, our engine continued to sputter and surge. As we started to descend, my instructor told me to look down and let him know when I saw the ground. His visibility from the aft cockpit was not as good as mine, and he asked me several times, "Do you see it?"

Each time, I replied, a little more nervously, "No sir, not yet." We passed 1,000 feet, nothing.

"Do you see it?!"

"Not yet, sir!"

We passed 900 feet, still nothing. Finally, we broke out of the clouds at about 800 feet.

Now there was the matter of getting the plane safely on the ground. We had just enough altitude to make the nearest runway. My instructor put in a sharp turn and entered the landing profile at about 300 feet. He was able to line up the runway, get the flaps down, and make a good landing. We taxied just clear of the runway and shut the engine down. The plane reeked of burning oil, and the crash crew was on the scene before our feet hit the runway. My first flight had come to an end.

The lesson my father taught me was based on experience. During his eight-year career, he witnessed plenty of emergencies, and was even involved in a few. By the time my career was all of one day old, I had already had my first emergency, and I finally understood what he was trying to say. It's not always going to happen to the other guy. It *can* happen to you, and when you least expect it.

2ndLt. O'Brien is a student naval aviator assigned to VT-6.

I realized that this was not one of the dirty instructor tricks I had heard so much about, but an actual emergency!

# My Flight With Christine:
# Trapped Aloft

by LtCol. Jesse G. Evans

My schedules officer called the other day, asking if I could fill in on a show-the-flag mission to Pensacola to give "kiddy rides" to aspiring student naval aviators. Well, yes, I could (even though it would eat a two-day break between trips at my other job).

We took off on a dreary, foggy morning. The birds were literally walking. A group of them was hanging out on the runway, and the tower wasn't going to let anyone go. After a pointed negotiation, I was allowed to hover-taxi the length of the runway to clear the birds so a Navy C-9 and I could take off without worrying about eating fowl.

The Navy types would be following the centerline stripes and transitioning to instruments as soon as they broke ground. I hold a "special" instrument card, which

grants me the option of taking off in 0/0 conditions, a dubious operation in a helicopter and certainly not for the faint of heart.

At a mere 1,000 feet above the ground, we broke out into a blinding sunrise, framed by a flawless, blue sky. I cancelled IFR, because this was just too pretty to waste. What a sight—the fog lying soft and flat below us and bathed in gold. Our Cobra's shadow danced with us over the fog bank as I leveled right on top and enjoyed the sensation of speed.

The weather in Pensacola was forecast to be clear, and we had fuel to spare. The fog undercast would dissipate somewhere in south Alabama. Airliners glided overhead as we crossed their final-approach course into Atlanta, configuring for landing, then silently disappearing into the whipped cream a few miles off the left stub wing. They had to be doing automatic landings; the soup was too thick for anything else. There was no going back. We had to head south to get down.

Clearing the Atlanta terminal area, we climbed to 4,500 feet, then 6,500 feet and enjoyed a free ride on the wind VFR over the top. We were smokin', but the global-positioning system was acting up. It's kind of a Rube Goldberg operation. The fleet needed accurate navigation and came up with an interim fix while we waited for funding to catch up. This particular Cobra had not been through the upgrade yet. Our GPS rig was powered by the aircraft through our biological-chemical-suit blower circuit and is held by velcro to the glare-shield in the gunner's position. It usually does a good job but my copilot-gunner wasn't having any luck with it on aircraft power or batteries. It had worked fine in flight. Equipment and the inline fuses had appeared intact on preflight. I switched the TACAN from Dobbins to LaGrange, the nearest radio-navigation aid to our intended track, but the instrument needles did not swing around in response. Now the TACAN was acting up, too; we were in the bloody Bermuda triangle. Oh, well, we were clear of controlled airspace, squawking, talking, the engines were purring, and we were on a heading that would take us approximately on course. I had initialized the doppler unit with the ramp coordinates before departure and fed it the current date and zulu time. It's not as good as a GPS, but will keep you within a few miles. It's not good enough for an instrument approach or a rocket attack, but fine for what we needed on this day.

My copilot-gunner punched in

the coordinates of our destination, South Whiting Field, and we were on our way. I tuned in 750 AM on the ADF because it's the strongest station for hundreds of miles. Their mast is on top of Stone Mountain and would serve as a handy cross-check of our outbound course from Atlanta for a long time. The DME portion of the TACAN was jumping around but generally counted down as we approached LaGrange, another small verification of the doppler. A few minutes later, it joined the TACAN on the MIA list. My eyes were so close to the puzzle that I wasn't seeing the pieces falling into place.

> I told my partner I was going to spray paint "Christine" on this bird after Steven King's hot rod from hell.

I talked to Macon Radio to confirm that Dobbins had opened our flight plan. As expected, FSS didn't have a strip on us. The briefer and I carried on a short conversation that would have seemed cold to an earthperson, but included quite friendly aviation-speak. He got everything squared away and ensured that Whiting knew we were on the way. He also confirmed the forecast clear and a million at our destination.

We were carrying one wing tank. I usually leave any auxiliary fuel I don't need for the mission profile in those tanks as I can jettison them and enjoy an instant increase in performance. We didn't need any of it and I started the fuel transfer. If anything else went wrong, fuel was the last thing I wanted to worry about. We were over a sea of white with no precise fix. If we needed one, Atlanta Center would have to supply it with radar. The compass had required correction after takeoff, but was now tracking OK with the wet compass. Our avionics were telling me not to count on having radios.

When we lost lock on 750 AM, the ADF refused to respond to any urging to find another station. I turned it off. I told my partner I was going to spray paint "Christine" on this bird after Steven King's hot rod from hell. Maintenance was going to love us for writing up so many avionics gripes. With that pronouncement, the radar altimeter's off-flag popped up. It would press-to-test normal, but insisted on displaying an off-flag, nonetheless. I switched it off, hoping it would cool down and be revivable if needed. We were only a few rungs above your basic stick-and-rudder flying machine at this point.

I don't know if the needle moved or if it had been down there for a while. Scanning instruments is not a conscious act after so many years. Pilots notice anything that moves out of the normal range. We detect malfunctions before any of the other warning systems are activated because of the shiver of a needle. This particular indicator belonged to the transmission-oil pressure.

In helicopters, everything depends on the transmission. If it stops working, the machine stops flying. The pressure was not out of the normal operating range, but simply nailed steady to the bottom of the arc. I'm sure it had been mid-range previously because I hadn't noticed it, and any extreme is notable. It said 40 psi, barely in limits. The oil temperature read normal, and there were no caution lights. What should we do? Divert and abort the mission for normal oil pressure? The white carpet was unbroken beneath us. We pressed on.

The doppler told me sanctuary was 20 minutes ahead when the undercast broke, revealing the flat expanse of south Alabama farmland. Minutes to go and the transmission temperature and pressure were holding steady within limits. I observed that we

would have to ensure it was properly serviced before flying the students.

Pensacola Approach identified us abeam Brewton and gave us a vector to the field. The doppler had wandered, and we corrected a few degrees east. We were required by the tasking order to shoot an instrument approach, which let us avoid traffic and keep from running afoul of the local course rules. The TH-57s swarm around south field like a bunch of angry bees.

Downwind for the radar approach to runway 32 passing 4,000 feet descending, the master-caution lights and caution-system warning tone blared. The transmission-oil pressure was descending faster than we were and settled near the bottom of the indicator. The transmission low-oil pressure and oil-cooler bypass lights came on.

South Whiting Field was 4,000 feet below and close abeam on the right. I eased the collective down to the flat-pitch stop and told approach, "We are declaring an emergency, loss of transmission-oil pressure. We're autorotating to South Field."

The controller sounded cool, and I sure hope I did.

"Roger, Reddog, switch tower, and good luck."

We switched to the tower's frequency, and I repeated our declaration. I told my copilot-gunner to lock his harness. That was the extent of our discussion of the emergency. This was covered in the brief, and I hoped we understood each other. The airspeed was indicating more than 160 knots, and "Christine" was coming down like a manhole cover.

A sweeping 200-degree turn to the right, then a shallow left turn put us on glide slope and in line with a taxiway at the approach end of runway 23. We glided in smoothly, decelerating across the field boundary, a very small increase of collective on nose over and a slide home.

Tower never missed a beat and had everyone out of our way in seconds with the cavalry on the way. The crash trucks were there before I could roll down the throttles. We were delighted they didn't get a workout; the transmission had held together. The mechanics from our sister unit in New Orleans pitched in without hesitation, providing ground-handling equipment and sweat. The Navy transient line bent over backward to help us secure a turn spot and hangar space, then tow Christine where our Marines could do surgery.

She was orange from the shoulders down with oil, and the transmission was bone dry. Oil was raining off the inside of the cowling when we propped the covers open, and the drippings off the length of the aircraft drew a rough shadow on the taxiway. A short, braided oil line that runs to the oil cooler had failed. It had been spraying in the compartment for some time and had let go abeam the field. Our maintenance officer wondered aloud if our avionics failures may have been caused by the many gallons of hot oil spreading through the airframe. It was indeed soaked inside and out from the failure point aft to the tip of the tail. There will be no corrosion problems there.

The airspeed was indicating more than 160 knots, and "Christine" was coming down like a manhole cover.

We had briefed emergencies ad nauseum. The copilot-gunner was a new guy to our squadron, and we had never flown together before. Funny, it usually takes a while to develop an opinion of another pilot. He showed himself to be a solid thinker and a cool head throughout. He's good to go.

I guess my new anxiety dream will have to be autorotating down through fog with no radio altimeter and a screaming transmission, instead of my old tried-and-true walking to the pencil sharpener during high-school math and realizing I'm naked.

LtCol. Evans flies with HMLA-773

the coordinates of our destination, South Whiting Field, and we were on our way. I tuned in 750 AM on the ADF because it's the strongest station for hundreds of miles. Their mast is on top of Stone Mountain and would serve as a handy cross-check of our outbound course from Atlanta for a long time. The DME portion of the TACAN was jumping around but generally counted down as we approached LaGrange, another small verification of the doppler. A few minutes later, it joined the TACAN on the MIA list. My eyes were so close to the puzzle that I wasn't seeing the pieces falling into place.

> I told my partner I was going to spray paint "Christine" on this bird after Steven King's hot rod from hell.

I talked to Macon Radio to confirm that Dobbins had opened our flight plan. As expected, FSS didn't have a strip on us. The briefer and I carried on a short conversation that would have seemed cold to an earthperson, but included quite friendly aviation-speak. He got everything squared away and ensured that Whiting knew we were on the way. He also confirmed the forecast clear and a million at our destination.

We were carrying one wing tank. I usually leave any auxiliary fuel I don't need for the mission profile in those tanks as I can jettison them and enjoy an instant increase in performance. We didn't need any of it and I started the fuel transfer. If anything else went wrong, fuel was the last thing I wanted to worry about. We were over a sea of white with no precise fix. If we needed one, Atlanta Center would have to supply it with radar. The compass had required correction after takeoff, but was now tracking OK with the wet compass. Our avionics were telling me not to count on having radios.

When we lost lock on 750 AM, the ADF refused to respond to any urging to find another station. I turned it off. I told my partner I was going to spray paint "Christine" on this bird after Steven King's hot rod from hell. Maintenance was going to love us for writing up so many avionics gripes. With that pronouncement, the radar altimeter's off-flag popped up. It would press-to-test normal, but insisted on displaying an off-flag, nonetheless. I switched it off, hoping it would cool down and be revivable if needed. We were only a few rungs above your basic stick-and-rudder flying machine at this point.

I don't know if the needle moved or if it had been down there for a while. Scanning instruments is not a conscious act after so many years. Pilots notice anything that moves out of the normal range. We detect malfunctions before any of the other warning systems are activated because of the shiver of a needle. This particular indicator belonged to the transmission-oil pressure.

In helicopters, everything depends on the transmission. If it stops working, the machine stops flying. The pressure was not out of the normal operating range, but simply nailed steady to the bottom of the arc. I'm sure it had been mid-range previously because I hadn't noticed it, and any extreme is notable. It said 40 psi, barely in limits. The oil temperature read normal, and there were no caution lights. What should we do? Divert and abort the mission for normal oil pressure? The white carpet was unbroken beneath us. We pressed on.

The doppler told me sanctuary was 20 minutes ahead when the undercast broke, revealing the flat expanse of south Alabama farmland. Minutes to go and the transmission temperature and pressure were holding steady within limits. I observed that we

would have to ensure it was properly serviced before flying the students.

Pensacola Approach identified us abeam Brewton and gave us a vector to the field. The doppler had wandered, and we corrected a few degrees east. We were required by the tasking order to shoot an instrument approach, which let us avoid traffic and keep from running afoul of the local course rules. The TH-57s swarm around south field like a bunch of angry bees.

Downwind for the radar approach to runway 32 passing 4,000 feet descending, the master-caution lights and caution-system warning tone blared. The transmission-oil pressure was descending faster than we were and settled near the bottom of the indicator. The transmission low-oil pressure and oil-cooler bypass lights came on.

South Whiting Field was 4,000 feet below and close abeam on the right. I eased the collective down to the flat-pitch stop and told approach, "We are declaring an emergency, loss of transmission-oil pressure. We're autorotating to South Field."

The controller sounded cool, and I sure hope I did.

"Roger, Reddog, switch tower, and good luck."

We switched to the tower's frequency, and I repeated our declaration. I told my copilot-gunner to lock his harness. That was the extent of our discussion of the emergency. This was covered in the brief, and I hoped we understood each other. The airspeed was indicating more than 160 knots, and "Christine" was coming down like a manhole cover.

A sweeping 200-degree turn to the right, then a shallow left turn put us on glide slope and in line with a taxiway at the approach end of runway 23. We glided in smoothly, decelerating across the field boundary, a very small increase of collective on nose over and a slide home.

Tower never missed a beat and had everyone out of our way in seconds with the cavalry on the way. The crash trucks were there before I could roll down the throttles. We were delighted they didn't get a workout; the transmission had held together. The mechanics from our sister unit in New Orleans pitched in without hesitation, providing ground-handling equipment and sweat. The Navy transient line bent over backward to help us secure a turn spot and hangar space, then tow Christine where our Marines could do surgery.

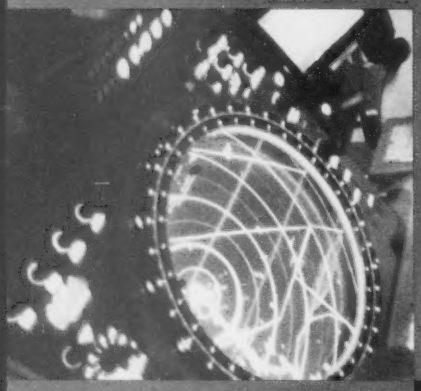
She was orange from the shoulders down with oil, and the transmission was bone dry. Oil was raining off the inside of the cowling when we propped the covers open, and the drippings off the length of the aircraft drew a rough shadow on the taxiway. A short, braided oil line that runs to the oil cooler had failed. It had been spraying in the compartment for some time and had let go abeam the field. Our maintenance officer wondered aloud if our avionics failures may have been caused by the many gallons of hot oil spreading through the airframe. It was indeed soaked inside and out from the failure point aft to the tip of the tail. There will be no corrosion problems there.

The airspeed was indicating more than 160 knots, and "Christine" was coming down like a manhole cover.

We had briefed emergencies ad nauseum. The copilot-gunner was a new guy to our squadron, and we had never flown together before. Funny, it usually takes a while to develop an opinion of another pilot. He showed himself to be a solid thinker and a cool head throughout. He's good to go.

I guess my new anxiety dream will have to be autorotating down through fog with no radio altimeter and a screaming transmission, instead of my old tried-and-true walking to the pencil sharpener during high-school math and realizing I'm naked.

LtCol. Evans flies with HMLA-773



# ONE LAST NIGHT TRAP

William M. Crosby

*by Lt. Doug Cochran*

The good stories always seem to start the same way: a dark night, no moon, and no horizon. It was month five of my third and most exciting cruise, as a Super JO in an FA-18 squadron. After five months of flying combat missions in two separate theaters, it was time to go home. We had left the Gulf six days earlier and hadn't flown since. CAG had decided to give us one more fly-day before going through the Ditch and entering our last port. Of course, the air plan maximized night sorties; we had to keep everyone night-current for the translant.

I was scheduled for current-operations watch officer, basically an air-wing SDO, during the middle of the day. That meant a night trap was my only opportunity to fly on one of our last fly-days. I was on the hunt to break a hundred traps for cruise, and I wasn't about to pass up the chance to fly, even if it might be one more night trap.

My wingman and I were scheduled for a Red Air mission against some Toms. Man-up and pre-flight checks went normally. Sitting behind cat 1, I did something I never do. I had some extra time, so I decided to put the time in the UFC. To do so, the INS has to be in NAV. I always take off in CV, but that night I changed my pattern. Mistake? I doubt it, but like all good fighter pilots, I am superstitious about my habit patterns.

As I rotated the switch to NAV, that little voice in the back of my head said, "Boy, this would be a bad night for the INS to dump." It didn't, and moments later, I was in tension on the cat.

Everything checked good, lights on, the cat fired; "What's that master caution for? Fly the jet, where's my saving grace?" The velocity vector was gone. "This is not happening on my last night flight of cruise."

Sure enough, the INS had dumped on the stroke. No big deal. I had a 1+30 cycle to get an in-flight align-

ment. Standby gyro was being displayed on the HUD, and all was well.

"What was that?" I said. The standby-gyro display on the HUD just started tumbling. That made things interesting. After some follow-on checks, sure enough, both the standby displays on the HUD and the DDI were tumbling at random intervals. One minute they were stable, the next they were spinning. The actual standby gyro, conveniently placed directly behind my right knee, was stable. It kept getting better. I had to do a little night tanking before I could start my IFA.

"Four Oh Four, you are low and lined up right. Ten degrees left and climb." That's not a good start.

After an uneventful dance behind the S-3, it was time to pull out the book, go through the checklist, and get my IFA started. My wingman and I told the mission commander that we wouldn't be playing tonight, and we headed off for our hour of straight and level. As my luck would have it, the INS was degraded and would not accept an IFA. My wingman and I tried all the tricks in the book, with no luck either getting the INS to take an IFA or getting the HUD/DDI to stop spinning. Now all that was running through my head was how I was going to get this thing aboard on a dark night on the standby gyro alone.

As I assessed my situation, I determined that my altitude, airspeed and waterline symbol on the HUD were accurate. It was only the pitch ladders that seemed to be spinning. This was a plus because, now, if I could only get to a position behind the ship where I could receive ILS, I might be able to get this thing aboard. After some discussion with my squadron rep, we decided that I'd fly a section approach as Dash 2 and allow my wingman to get me to a safe start.

All was going as planned as we reached three miles behind the ship and approached our push over point. As my lead began his descent, I ask for a double-check on what ILS was showing him. My ILS indicated well below glideslope. Lead confirmed his showed on-and-on. At a mile, I had the carrier box in sight, took over the approach visually, and told my lead, "I got it." The next thing I heard was, "Four Oh Four, three-quarters of a mile, call the ball." As I looked out for the ball, I clearly saw the datums but no ball.

"Clara."

"You're low," came the response from the LSO. Not a good start to an already challenging approach. After a couple of power calls from paddles, I saw the ball all right. It was racing toward the top of the lens. One last correction and it was time to suck this one up and take my bolter like a man.

Flying again. Fortunately, my lead was right where he was supposed to be and we joined up quickly. Not the way I wanted that one to end, but at least I knew I could get over the ramp safely. I just had to get to a better start. After some discussion with my lead, we concluded that my ILS was giving me erroneous indications. Remember how it all started? Dark, no moon, no horizon. OK, what did I have left in my bag of tricks?

After more discussion on downwind, we decide to have the ship lock me up so I could get ACLS and have some kind of reference on glide slope and line-up. We talked about the pitfalls and decided to have lead turn his data link off and verified the side number they would be sending the information to. I had now con-

vinced myself that with a good crosscheck from lead and his ILS, I would be able to verify I was getting valid ACLS information. Mistake No. 1.

Ten-mile hook. Plenty of time to check everything out.

"Four Oh Four," approach called, "lock-on six miles. Say needles."

"On and up," I replied.

"Concur. Fly mode two."

Still flying wing, it was time to crosscheck with lead's ILS. He agreed. As we approached our pushover point the second time, everything looked good. My ACLS was matching his ILS, and I was slowly learning to ignore the spinning pitch ladder. Two and a half miles and I had this one in the bag. We compared his ILS and my ACLS once again and they still concurred. At that point, I told lead that I wanted the lead and he could fly wing just to make sure I didn't fly into the water. Mistake No.2.

At 2 miles, everything was still on and on, and I could see a couple of lights that appeared to be the carrier. Unbeknownst to me at that time, my wingman and I were starting to separate. He was preparing to take it around, as it appeared to him that I was all set up. The next thing I heard was, "A mile and a half, drifting slightly left of course on glide path." Slight correction to the right and a quick peek to look for the carrier box. Nothing but a single light; that was strange.

Fortunately, paddles was ready for me and wasn't about to let me go around again. Remember, this was our last night flying, and we were entering the Ditch at first light. This was no time to have a Hornet stuck in Egypt. I heard the mike key, but I didn't register what was just said. My wingman answered, "Four Oh Four is on the right." What was that? Did paddles just ask which one I was? The next thing that ran through my mind was why was my RADALT (set at 450 feet) going off, and why I didn't see the carrier box, much less the lens?

"Four Oh Four, you are low and lined up right. Ten degrees left and climb." That's not a good start. All I saw was that single light ahead of me. I put in the correction.

"You are approaching centerline, below glide slope."

I reached up to turn the spinning HUD off and thought, "Here we go again."

Now I saw the landing area approaching from the left at high speed.

"You're on centerline, back to the right, approaching glide slope." Where was the ball? Here it comes racing off the bottom of the lens again. Not again. "You're overpowered, easy with it, power back on."

Damn, I trapped. Catch my breath. Now the yellowshirt was frantically waving at me. Why couldn't he give me a few seconds?

How did I get in this mess? As my roommate (the paddles who saved my life that night) and I sat around midrats Monday-night-quarterbacking, we hashed out my mistakes and tried to apply our global knowledge. I had no chance of getting an alignment with a degraded INS and there was nothing I do about the spinning standby indications.

We also determined my ILS was giving me faulty indications. However, remember mistake No. 1? As we looked back, even though lead had his data link off, the ship still locked him up, and was sending me the information. As we were both in the same piece of sky, our crosschecks concurred. The underlying problem was that the ship really had no idea which aircraft it had locked up when both aircraft were in the same area. This resulted in me receiving down and right indications when my wingman started to separate. Ergo, a low, lined-up-right start.

I know what you are thinking: What happened to flying a Mode 3 backup approach? At the time, I thought I was, and the needles were concurring right up to the point my wingman broke away.

How could I have prevented this? Remember mistake No. 2? Well, if I had just trusted my lead and flown a section approach right up to the ball call, I could have prevented all the above. I am fortunate that paddles was on the step or I could have been eating meat on a stick for rats, or worse, been fish bait.

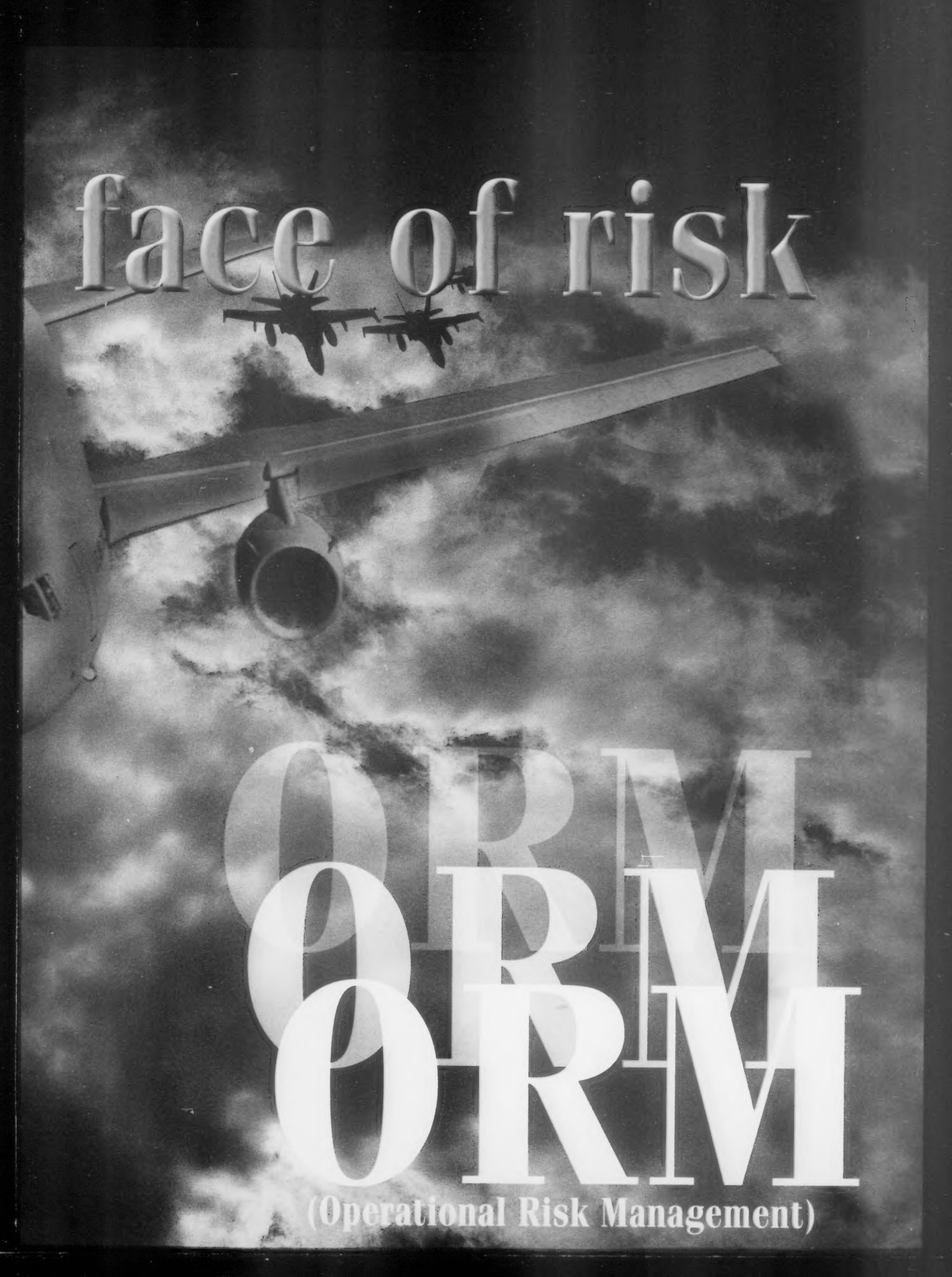
Remember that single light I kept seeing on my second approach? It turned out that was the one light that lights up the bomb-staging area on the starboard side of the island. Not much room to land there.

An old lesson learned time and time again: Everyone is trying to kill you, and they sure don't need any help.

Lt.Cochran flies with VFA-87.

# Flying in the

www.safetycenter.navy.mil


face of risk
ORM
ORM
(Operational Risk Management)

# BRAVO Zulu

BZs require an endorsement from the nominating squadron's CO and the appropriate CAG, wing commander or MAG commander.

In the case of helo dets, the CO of the ship will suffice. A squadron zapper and a 5-by-7-inch photo of the entire crew should accompany the BZ nomination. Electronically-submitted photos must be at least 300 dpi. Please include a squadron telephone number so we can call with questions.

Capt. Thomas Dolan
Maj. Brian Kennedy

**MAWTS-1**

During a lead change on a night-vision goggle training hop, Maj. Kennedy and Capt. Dolan found that the downward movement of the collective in their AH-1W was restricted to approximately 65 percent torque. The coolie hat for the chaff-and-flare dispenser had fallen off the collective-mounted switch and become lodged in the collective-control linkage. The two aviators followed NATOPS procedures for control interference and discussed their options after determining that 65 percent exceeded their current HIGE requirement.

They decided the best option would be to make a sliding landing back at MCAS Yuma. The challenge, however, would be to bleed off enough airspeed to land and then secure the engines at the right moment. If they secured the engines too soon, they could lose tail-rotor effectiveness while still sliding down the runway, causing the aircraft to yaw and possibly flip onto its side. If they secured the engines too late, the aircraft would be light on the skids as it moved forward, and again, it might roll over.

The TACAN and RADALT had also failed.

Maj. Kennedy told his wingman to tell the necessary agencies about their problem, contact maintenance control to screen the aircraft's ADB for a potential cause of the binding controls, and assist with a possible solution.

After getting a steer toward MCAS Yuma from their wingman, Maj.Kennedy and Capt. Dolan prepared for landing. They decided the best way to slow the aircraft would be to make a series of high angle-of-bank, 360-degree turns to dissipate their airspeed before making a slide-on landing.

Once over the runway, Maj. Kennedy began a series of eight 360s while Capt. Dolan called out airspeed and altitude. Maj. Kennedy succeeded in lowering the collective to approximately 40 percent torque after four turns. They decided their airspeed and power were low enough to attempt the landing and gently slid the aircraft onto the runway surface at 40 knots. Maj. Kennedy continued to "fly" the aircraft and maintained control as the Cobra slid an additional 2,000 feet.

When the aircraft slid across a concrete taxiway, it slowed considerably, and the crew secured the throttles. Collective movement was restored after the landing as the jolt of the landing dislodged the FOD from the control linkage.

2ndLt. Anwar Al-Jadan
Lt. Mark Junco

## VT-2

While on the final maneuver of a basic-instrument hop, Lt. Junco noticed a strange vibration in his T-34C. Taking control from his student, Kuwaiti 2ndLt. Al-Jadan, the instructor reduced power, and the vibration stopped. When Lt. Junco added power, the vibration returned. There were no other indications of trouble. They tested the annunciator panel to check that all lights were working.

Assuming the worst, Lt. Junco started chip-light procedures. He again reduced power and told 2ndLt. Al-Jadan that they would make a precautionary emergency landing to the nearest field.

After the landing, a maintenance crew found a metal chunk in the reduction gearbox with gear teeth and part of a serial number. If Lt. Junco had continued the flight, the trainer's propeller could have left the aircraft.

LCdr. Michael Martin
Lt. Ed Grohe
Lt. Pete Milnes
Lt. Dennis Mills

## VAQ-137

A section of Rook Prowlers entered the break at Whiteman AFB. As Lt. Grohe lowered the gear and flaps of Rook 1, the crew heard a loud bang beneath their aircraft. They told tower they would circle to troubleshoot. Then they climbed, asking their wingman to check their configuration. As the landing-gear indicator showed three down, the crew saw both combined-hydraulics gauges were showing a complete loss of pressure.

The crew completed the checklists for landing without combined hydraulics and lowered the flaps and slats electrically. Without combined hydraulics, however, the Prowler didn't have normal brakes, nosewheel steering, and flaperon popups (spoilers). Whiteman had no arresting gear, but no other diverts were available.

The crew detached their wingman and turned in at four miles to set up for the approach. They discussed the likely possibility of leaving the runway.

Lt. Grohe gently touched down and held the nose up to aerobrake. He felt the aircraft pull to the left, which became pronounced as the nose fell through. Applying the auxiliary brakes bled them to zero, and the Prowler coasted down the runway. With no brakes, LCdr. Martin, ECMO 1, lowered the arresting hook to add friction, and Lt. Grohe pulled the parking brake at 45 knots at the 2-board. The aircraft still pulled left, but stopped with 1,800 feet of runway remaining.

On deck, the crew found the left main-gear strut had severed several hydraulic lines.

## Milestones

**Class A Mishap-Free Flight Hours**

| Command | Date | Hours | Years |
|---|---|---|---|
| VFA-113 | 09/28/99 | 110,100 | 25 |
| VF-143 | 10/12/99 | 39,400 | 11 |
| HS-4 | 10/12/99 | 11,000 | 4 |
| VQ-2 | 10/12/99 | 10,000 | 2 |
| VAW-123 | 10/17/99 | 62,800 | 31 |
| HS-2 | 10/19/99 | 45,000 | 14 |
| HMLA-369 | 10/22/99 | 50,000 | 8.6 |
| HS-15 FOR | 10/25/99 | 10,000 | 3 |
| VFA-192 | 10/30/99 | 67,000 | 16 |
| VAW-116 | 11/03/99 | 48,000 | 24 |
| VAQ-129 | 11/03/99 | 51,250 | 7 |
| VMGR-152 | 11/05/99 | 220,000 | 25 |
| HM-14 | 11/15/99 | 20,000 | 6 |
| VP-66 | 11/17/99 | 100,000 | 29 |
| VAQ-136 | 11/19/99 | 21,000 | 12 |
| VFA-137 | 12/02/99 | 55,000 | 14 |
| HMM-265 | 12/02/99 | 45,000 | 11 |
| VFA-94 | 12/04/99 | 33,900 | 8 |
| HMM-161 | 12/09/99 | 20,000 | 4.9 |
| VRC-30 DET 5 | 12/12/99 | 6,000 | 5 |
| VS-30 | 12/15/99 | 70,000 | 20 |
| VAW-121 | 12/16/99 | 64,000 | 33 |
| VAQ-134 | 12/16/99 | 42,300 | 29 |
| VP-66 | 12/27/99 | 100,000 | 29 |
| VMFA(AW)-332 | 12/27/99 | 80,000 | 21 |
| VFA-131 | 12/27/99 | 47,500 | 12 |
| VFA-97 | 12/27/99 | 18,000 | 5 |
| VP-26 | 01/01/00 | 275,000 | 37 |
| HSL-41 | 01/21/00 | 100,000 | 17 |
| HSL-45 | 01/27/00 | 71,000 | 10 |
| VRC-30 | 01/27/00 | 150,000 | 24 |
| HSL-40 | 01/27/00 | 78,000 | 15 |
| VP-46 | 01/29/00 | 249,000 | 36 |

## Class A Flight-Mishap Rate

| | FY 00 (THRU 1/31/00) | | FY 99(THRU 1/31/99) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Rate | No. | Rate |
| NAVY/MARINE | 11 | 2.39 | 6 | 1.28 |
| All Navy | 8 | 2.29 | 3 | 0.85 |
| All Marine | 3 | 2.73 | 3 | 2.65 |
| NAVAIRLANT | 0 | 33.26 | 2 | 2.07 |
| NAVAIRPAC | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| MARFORLANT | 1 | 2.72 | 0 | 0.00 |
| MARFORPAC | 2 | 3.78 | 3 | 5.74 |
| CNATRA | 1 | 0.87 | 1 | 0.88 |
| NAVAIRRES | 2 | 5.99 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 4thMAW | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| NAVAIRSYSCOM | 1 | 10.10 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Non-TYCOM | 1 | 32.68 | 0 | 0.00 |

## Class A Mishaps

| Aircraft | Command | Date | Fatalities |
|---|---|---|---|
| FA-18A | VFA-201 | 12/03/99 | 0 |

A Hornet departed controlled flight during air-combat maneuvering.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FA-18C | VFA-34 | 12/04/99 | 0 |

A Hornet struck the round-down during night-CQ recovery.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CH-46E | HMM-166 | 12/09/99 | 7 |

A Sea Knight crashed at sea during VBSS training to a single-spot oiler — 18 on board.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C-9B | VR-59 | 12/19/99 | 0 |

A Skytrain II departed the runway during a landing.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FA-18D | VMFA(AW)-242 | 01/10/00 | 0 |

A Hornet departed controlled flight during 1 V 1 air-to-air training.

# We Almost Made
# or a SeaCat!

by Lt. Gabe Soltero

At least once in his career, a pilot has a scary experience—I mean sheer terror. Not one where the weather is bad and you're trying to make it home on fumes, but a true brush with death.

Of course, mine happened on a beautiful day, CAVU to the moon. My crew was doing some leftover VERTREP with a supply ship following a replenishment, which is a good way to break up the monotony of plane-guard duty. We had just dropped off our last load on the supply ship and were on our way back to the carrier, about a 4-mile transit.

"Hang on a sec," the Air Boss called, as we approached from the port quarter. "I'll have winds for you as soon as we get out of our turn." We loitered just off the port quarter at about 800 yards, parallel to the ship at 150 feet and 80 knots, expecting a charlie at any moment.

Remember in flight school, when instructors prefaced each simulated emergency with, "You're flying along, fat, dumb, and happy when suddenly..."? Well, our situation was not that far off. As we flew close aboard, roughly abeam the island, we heard a loud "Whoosh." Thinking I had just lost a window or, worse, an engine, I looked at my gauges and started to check my rear-view mirror, but did not get that far.

At my 2 o'clock was a Tomcat, rolling wings level at my altitude following a high-speed fly-by of the carrier. All this happened in less than two seconds. That Tomcat had flown between us and the CVN, passing

Photo composite by Patrick Eaton

# a TomHawk,

within 100 yards of my helicopter at mach who-knows-what, scaring the hell out of us. The crewmen felt the hot exhaust through the open cabin door as the jet screamed by, which gives you an idea of exactly how close that bird came to making my Seahawk the first helicopter with swept-back wings protruding from its fuselage.

It took a few hours to get some info on this fly-by, as the Tomcat had not responded to the tower's radio calls and had its transponder turned off. I walked up to Pri-Fly to talk to the Boss and got the lowdown.

Turns out this Tomcat had been allegedly cleared to make the fly-by on another carrier, which at the time was more than 100 miles away. How could a pilot and a RIO make it all the way to an operational squadron without knowing how to use a TACAN. To this day I do not know if these guys even realized they almost hit a helo.

Does this mean I think the Navy should stop fly-bys? Absolutely not. These maneuvers are a long-standing tradition in naval aviation and offer the flight-deck crews a chance to see the jets they launch at peak performance, usually bringing a smile to their faces. Plus, the fly-bys are fun to do.

However, as with any maneuver that combines high speed with low altitude, certain precautions are necessary. For instance, make sure there's no one in your way, and don't buzz the wrong ship. If a pilot follows these simple guidelines, no one gets hurt.

Lt. Soltero flies with HS-15.

As we flew close aboard, roughly abeam the island, we heard a loud "Whoosh."

# Tomcat in the Break, Seahawk on Final

by LCdr. Scott Wolfe

I was a typical jaygee–confident and always ready to fly. We were in the Puerto Rico op area doing workups. Our Aegis cruiser was on the Vieques gun range, so we took the opportunity to get away from the ship and get some unit training. I was in the left seat, while the HAC (my OinC) was in the right seat. He let me fly because we weren't doing any tactical events, and I needed to get some precision approaches under my belt before my upcoming instrument check.

Our radar controller was doing a good job. Although the weather was CAVU, I kept my head down to simulate IMC as best I could. In the meantime, a carrier air wing was returning to Roosey Roads after an exercise. As I was about two miles from touchdown, doing 90 knots, my HAC surprised me with, "Up, up!"

I looked over to try to see what he was telling me, and I saw the nose of an F-14 coming straight for us, about 500 feet away, level with us at our 3 o'clock. His gear was down and he looked to be in a right turn.(Actually, he was at the 90 for the VFR pattern.)

My OinC grabbed the controls and yanked the stick back. The F-14 nosed over slightly as we started to climb over him. As the Tomcat flew below us, I saw the pilot's helmet, then the RIO's helmet, then a lot of gray F-14 fill my chin bubble.

The pilot must have cut power to get below us, and he must have also leveled his wings because he overshot the runway and looked like he was going to run into the mountain to the left of the runway. I waited for two chutes, but the fighter cleared the mountain and landed.

We had a nice chat with the controller and the tower about why they hadn't told us about the traffic and why the F-14 had been cleared in the first place when we were on final. They swore it would never happen again and were sorry. It would have been too late if my alert pilot hadn't kept his head on a swivel.

Later that night, I talked to one of the F-14 crewmen at the club. He had been Dash 3 on the flight. Apparently, the CAG had been in Dash 1, with the squadron XO in Dash 2. CAG had wanted to make a high-speed break, so, with tower's clearance, they had come in at 400 knots. Dash 2 was the crew that had nearly merged with our SH-60B.

During the flight debrief, the XO had told the lieutenant pilot in Dash 3 that it really hadn't been that close. I wonder if he really saw us. After they cleared us, we called our ATACO and asked him to look out for us as well. That lesson has helped keep me out of trouble more than a few times now.

VFR or IFR, we need to rely on our own eyes to stay alive.

LCdr. Wolfe flies with HSL-48.

# Letters

## Re: "It Would Have Been Nice to Know About This Guy" (Dec '99)

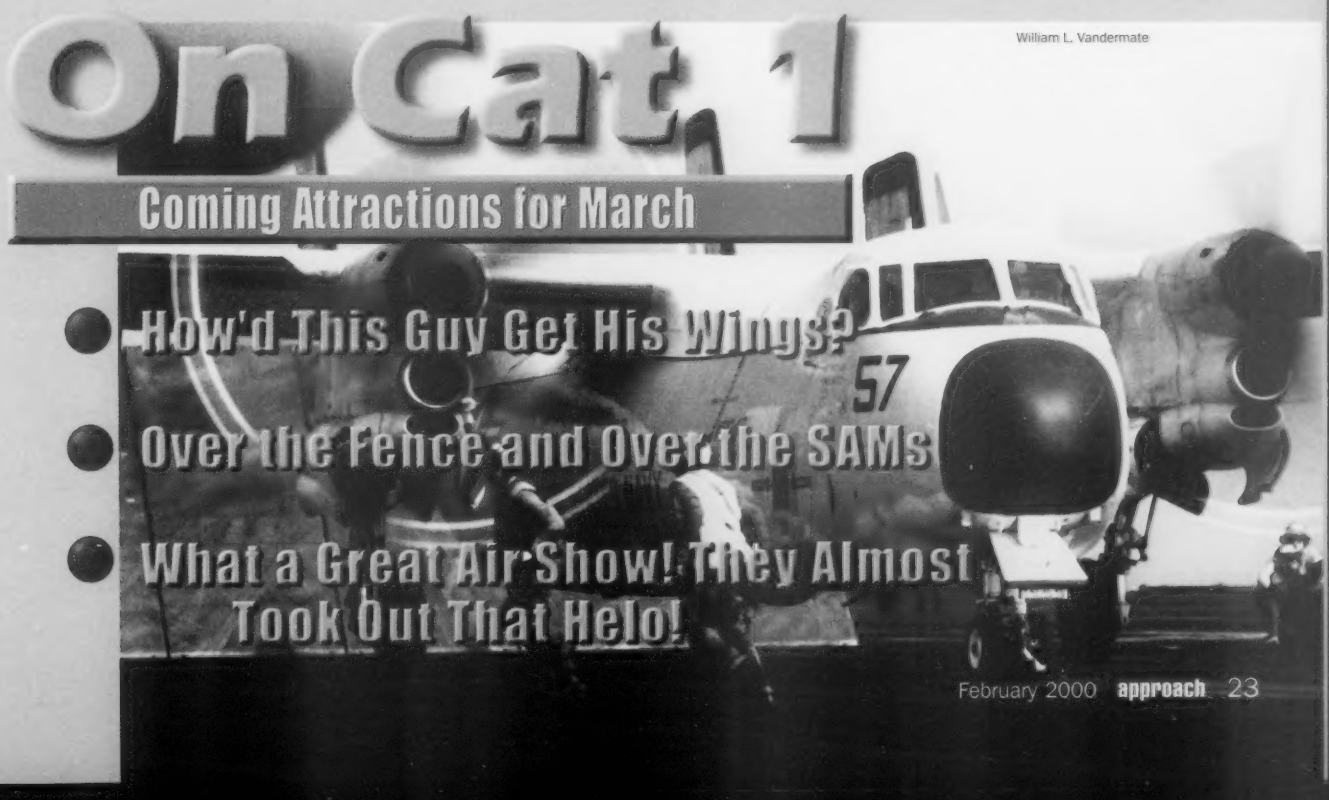
**NAS Oceana**–I was thoroughly disturbed by this story. *Approach* is a fine production, helping aircrew learn from others' mistakes, but this article was no more than one aviator trashing another. I had true faith that naval aviation would never stoop to this level, or that you would not publish such an article.

I realize you didn't print the new pilot's name, but I'm sure it is well known throughout the helo community. His reputation and future plans for a Navy career could now be crushed by the author's account. Perhaps this salty "helo god" could have used a little more tact in telling how he saved the day. I, for one, hope to never work with an aviator with so little regard for the true spirit of naval aviation.

Lt. Joe Barnes
CVW-3 LSO

If you've read *Approach* long enough, you know that our efforts concentrate on telling a story with lessons learned. We're never interested in "trashing" an individual or his career. In fact, we go to considerable lengths to protect people–occasionally from themselves. Sometimes, however, the story is worth telling, warts and all. We're sure the author was more interested in getting this message out than in holding another aviator up to additional discomfort.

There has been a lot of emphasis recently in getting back to the basic skills, as well as identifying high-risk aviators and communicating those concerns up the chain and protecting the people most affected, namely fellow crewmen. You might be interested to learn that in the last five years, there have been at least six Class A mishaps involving Navy and Marine Corps aircraft–tacair and helo–and 11 fatalities that have included causal factors linked to this lack of skill and high-risk behavior not being communicated through standardization boards and human factors councils.–Ed.


On Cat 1
Coming Attractions for March
How'd This Guy Get His Wings?
Over the Fence and Over the SAMs
What a Great Air Show! They Almost Took Out That Helo!
William L. Vandermate

by Ltjg. Charles Paquin

# My First Blue Angel

Everyone has a "There I was story. Mine takes place in the training command. I was heading out to the boat for the first time, confident as ever. My lead was a senior pilot, and this added to my feeling that all was well in the world. My bouncing grades were good, and I knew how to handle the jet.

As we made our way out to the ship, we dodged a thunderstorm or three. We were held overhead for an hour while the ship tried to get the SAR helo off the deck. Finally, with our fuel gauges steadily moving toward bingo, and with no chance to get the SAR bird airborne, we decided to head back to the beach.

I did my feet-dry checks as I had in the trainer many times before. I had heard of pilots blowing tires on the runway because they failed to get their anti-skid switch turned on. The T-45 isn't very forgiving on a wet runway with carrier-pressurized tires and the anti-skid off, and that was not how I wanted to make a name for myself.

The weather had continued to build, and the destination field was now IFR. We had briefed a PAR approach if the break wasn't open, so we flexed to our backup plan. The lead would go to one-half flaps and speed brakes in, while the wingman (me) would take separation on final by going to full flaps, speed-brakes out and fly on-speed. I stayed in tight parade because we were in and out of clouds and about to enter an overcast layer.

As we followed vectors for our PAR, the approach controller told us to our dirty up at about 10 miles out. When I saw the lead's flaps begin to move, I went to full flaps as briefed. Much to my surprise, lead did not fly out ahead of me. He had also gone to full flaps, boards out and had slowed to on-speed. I was still flying off his wing and couldn't build separation.

**When I saw the lead's flaps begin to move, I went to full flaps as briefed.**

I was confused. I expected the lead to brief me on our new game plan. The wait seemed like an eternity. But I was only a student and was flying on the wing of an experienced aviator who had an experienced instructor in his back seat. I kept quiet until we started receiving glide-slope calls. When I finally called the lead, I asked, "Understand you will drop me off?"

Lead replied, "No, stay on my wing, and we'll land together."

My comfort level dropped to rock bottom. Instead of questioning his decision to fly a section approach and landing, which wasn't briefed, in adverse weather, I remained quiet and prepared for the landing and rollout.

Knowing the runway was wet, I checked once again to ensure my anti-skid was on. Like a good student, I did what I was told and stayed on his wing in tight parade all the way to touchdown. I was cautious with my brakes, and we stayed in formation for the entire rollout and taxi back to the line.

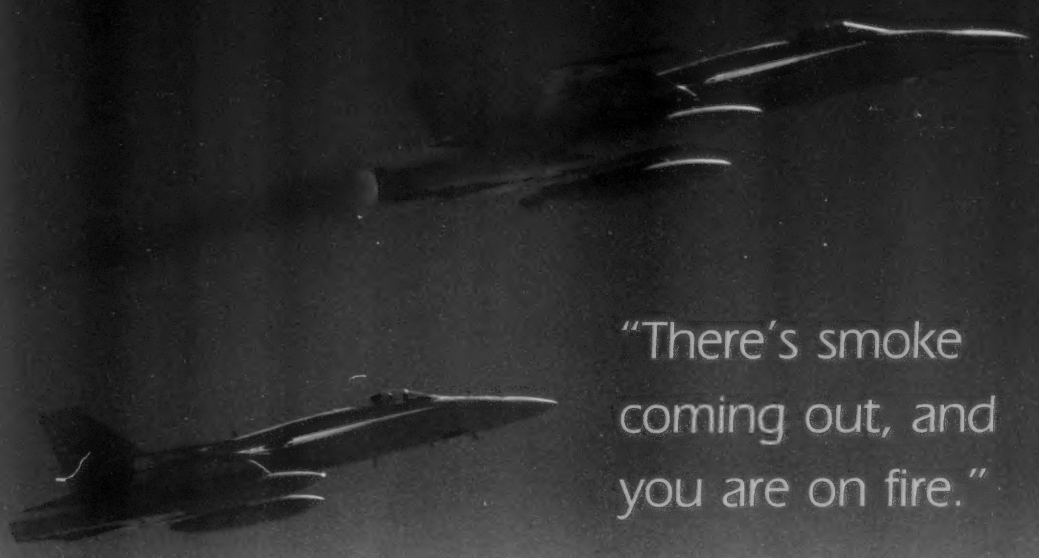
I breathed a sigh of relief. Back in the debrief room, no one mentioned the non-standard approach and landing. I walked out knowing that something didn't seem right, but was too new to put my finger on it. It took me a few days to realize how close to disaster I had been. This was a perfect example of allowing rank to remain in the cockpit. I didn't question lead about his decision. After all, he had thousands of flight hours and an instructor in his trunk. I was just a flight student. Looking back, I should have questioned him. Moreover, I should have explained to him that this was not standard and that I would prefer to pick up a new squawk and fly my own approach.

The instructor in the back of the lead's jet should have also called the lead on his decision to do a section landing.

If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. Regardless of rank or experience, ask questions and speak up if a situation arises that you are uncomfortable with or feel is being handled incorrectly.

Ltjg. Paquin flies with VAQ-132.

If you have questions about approach criteria for aircraft in formation, check OPNAV 3710.7R, para 5.1.12.6 on page 5-12.–Ed.



"There's smoke coming out, and you are on fire."

# It's Good To Be Dash 2

by Lt. Chris Maslowski

I was scheduled to lead a three-plane Red Air hop in support of our sister squadron. They were conducting a practice self-escort strike from the southeastern part of the TACTS 3A/B operating area off the coast of Virginia into the Dare County Range. The off-target VID presentation positioned our flight on the eastern part of 3B, roughly 80nm from Oceana. After we finished the event and made one more AIC run against our Dash 3, Dash 2 and I remained in the area for a 1 v 1 abeam set. The engagement was lengthy but the RTB seemed like an eternity.

I called KIO for fuel and began a climb toward home plate. Just as the flight switched off area-common in Comm 1, Betty seized the opportunity to brighten my day.

"Engine fire left, engine fire left...engine fire right, engine fire right."

At first, I was in denial. I thought, "No way could this actually be happening. Maybe it is just one of those sporadic cautions that will clear in a second." No such luck.

Reality set in quickly, and I knew I was in serious trouble. As my skipper in Dash 2 was joining, I told him that I had a left-engine fire light, a left-bleed caution, and a right-engine fire light, with no other related cautions. My IFEI indicated all was normal as I pulled the left engine to idle and the right one to mid-range (which, for a dual-engine fire, was the minimum practical for flight).

Dash 2 didn't see anything at first, but he soon realized the severity of the situation.

"There's smoke coming out, and you are on fire." He called. "Exactly what are all your indications?"

I repeated all indications, including a left-bleed light.

The left-engine bay and the left side of the right-engine bay were soon engulfed in

flames. I contacted Giant Killer on the front radio, declared an emergency, squawked 7700, and pointed toward the nearest divert field of Elizabeth City. Dash 2 switched the back radio between our tactical frequency and base, relaying pertinent information. After further evaluation of the situation and associated left-engine cautions, we decided to turn the left bleed off, secure the left engine, depress the fire light, use the fire-extinguisher light, and put the hook down. All we could do then was wait.

It seemed like an hour—no less—before the fires and indications began to subside. In reality, the fires and cautions were gone in under a minute and a half. The left engine was secured, the right engine operating 4.0, and all indications normal.

The skipper decided to continue on to NAS Oceana for a single-engine, half-flap trap on an off-duty runway. Discretion being the better part of valor, I enthusiastically concurred. While talking to approach, we decided to maintain our altitude until closer to the field and dropped the landing gear while over the water. I started a descent at 37nm from the field, with three down-and-locked.

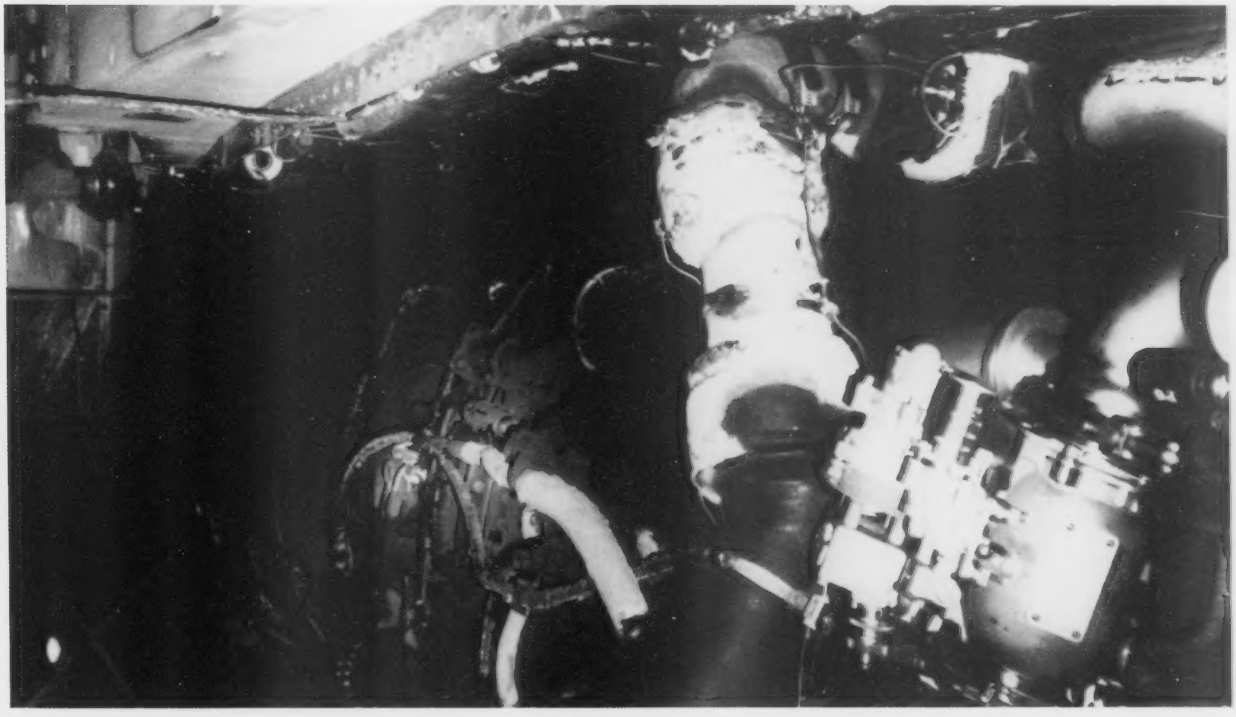
Numerous options and considerations were discussed between base, Dash 2, and myself on Comm 2 during the approach.

"Maintain above eighty-five percent on the operating engine, stand by for possible flight-control problems, fly on-speed, and don't get slow. If the hook skips, go around, but you may not want to..."

The decision for me was easy: I was going to fly the approach, trap, shut down the engine, and exit the aircraft posthaste. All went as planned.

The investigation is still pending as to the cause of the fire and the ensuing damage to the aircraft. The factors that brought the jet back were having my wingman visually inspect my aircraft, having good aircrew coordination about corrective actions and options, and doing the published emergency procedures.

Lt. Maslowski flies with VFA-37.



continued from page 5

ing evacuees what they were going to do, and hoisted them up into the open cargo door where the crew chief pointed to seats. It had to be done with speed and precision – no one on the crew was comfortable hovering this low, so close to power lines.

Late one day, a crewman noticed a solitary man and his dog walking down one of the high, dry roads. Something about the way the man walked and held onto his dog rang a bell.

"Hey, sir," he told his HAC, "we have to land. I think that guy is blind." Sure enough, the seeing-eye dog had kept the elderly man on dry land for more than a day, and they were near collapse.

The rescue of another dog nearly led to an engine failure. As the aircrew carried an elderly couple aboard, their small dog jumped in unobserved. As the H-3 transitioned to forward flight, the dog apparently wanted to see where they were going and jumped onto the communication console between the pilots. The crew chief hooked into the ICS and heard the pilots asking to get the dog out of the cockpit. The little dog didn't like being grabbed and took off, clawing his way toward the glare shield and resetting the IFF codes, radio frequencies, and securing the fuel-boost pumps. Only the guards over the switches on the fuel valves prevented fuel being cut off.

Just as the pilots had calmed down, found their freqs, and gotten a new squawk, the rescue swimmer plugged into the ICS. "Hey, did anyone know there's a dog in here?" he asked.

Often there just wasn't a procedure or instruction that fit the situation. How do you hoist a newborn? A crew chief faced a panicky mother as the swimmer held her small child. The baby ended up making the trip on his own in the crew chief's parachute bag.

Another crewman spotted a woman and child caught in rushing water. As the pilots moved into position to lower the swimmer for pickup, the struggling pair fell face first into the rushing water and were immediately swept away by the current. The HAC immediately took advantage of the H-3's boat hull and landed downstream of the pair, half floating, half hovering in the river. With the helo turned toward the banks of the stream the crew scooped them into the open cargo door.

Ltjg. Severson flies with HC-2.

# Slugs Above

by LCdr. Fred Shelton

Unseen by the TV cameras, but a major part of the effort, E-2s from several squadrons helped sort out the congestion and relay vital information. Naval Air Reserve squadron VAW-78's experience was typical.

As rain changed normally placid rivers into caldrons of destruction–in some places raising river levels 43 feet above normal, stranding people and animals on rooftops–north-central North Carolina became a SAR coordinator's worst nightmare. Local and state rescue workers were instantly overwhelmed with the worst inland flooding of the century.

As federal officials began helping, someone thought to call on the Hawkeye. Several East Coast squadrons went into action, assuming duties as airborne mission commander. VAW-78 was among the first on scene. Hawkeye crews were in the air for the better part of six days, coordinating up to 25 rescue helicopters at a time, from all branches of the service.

As the first crews in the air soon realized, all the sophisticated radar and IFF equipment at our disposal weren't worth a whole lot. From 15,000 feet, even the old eyeball wasn't very helpful.

Upon hearing the frustrations of our first airborne crew and recalling the old Boy Scout motto of "Be prepared," I ran to the parking lot and retrieved my 1999 Rand-McNalley road atlas from my car. Flipping to the North Carolina pages, we found that the atlas, mated with the copy machine, would prove to be an invaluable asset.

After issuing copies to our crew, we were more prepared to handle the deluge of raw information from rescue crews on the ground. Our situational awareness instantly multiplied.

The names of the rivers, roads, and towns now had meaning. We now knew where "Six miles east of Interstate Ninety-Five" was.

Now that we were in the ballpark, we needed to find the base paths. Most of the helicopter crews

didn't know the area. We asked the sheriffs and rescue personnel for landmarks to help guide our helo crews, pointing out water towers, prominent structures, and other distinguishing ground characteristics.

"Follow Route One Twenty-Two north to the Princeville water tower. Look to your left, and you'll see the high school. Land on the football field in the back." For the run to the Norfolk Red Cross, we chose a Norfolk-based Navy H-3 crew whose pilots lived in Norfolk and knew the downtown area.

As the missions progressed, the command center converted most of the emergency calls to latitude and longitude, allowing us to enter the coordinates in our system and provide immediate and accurate close control to the rescue helicopters.

Perhaps never before has an aircrew of any Hawkeye squadron had the opportunity to work with people from every department of the DoD, Coast Guard, FEMA, civilian, and state and local authorities simultaneously during a single mission. In one instance, because of atmospheric conditions, we couldn't communicate with the Air Force command center, so we had Coast Guard Air Operations relay our requests and answers via telephone. Also, as new players checked in, we had to contact ATC and get squawks assigned.

Keeping civilian sightseers clear was another challenge. Just like a car accident on the interstate creates an instant army of onlookers, the flooded rivers instantly drew news helicopters and several light civilian aircraft. ATC warned us of the traffic they were tracking, but several VFR squawkers were always present, creating just one more headache.

Despite vast differences in operating procedures between all the players, our aircrews were able to make immediate adjustments creating a single, cohesive, rescue operation. If nothing else, this was a great lesson on flexibility, common sense, and the urgent need to help people in dire trouble.

LCdr. Shelton flies with VAW-78.

## *What Did We Learn From All This?*

There's little doubt that spring floods or another series of disastrous mid-summer hurricanes are distinct possibilities. Local organizations—no matter whether they are in the Midwest or Southeast— will again be stretched to their limits. Now that the military has shown it can be called on to augment, ot even replace, these civilian groups when the threat becomes so great, every squadron that might get the call must be ready. Here are lessons learned you can build on. Input comes from all three units whose experiences were described in this article.

◆ The rescue swimmers faced the most physical demands. Having at least two swimmers in each aircraft can double the efficiency and increase safety by allowing a rest period for each swimmer. Also, one swimmer can direct survivors to the pick-up site while the other does the hoists. A corpsman or doctor would also be of great value in the helo.

◆ Get local road maps or large-scale charts of the areas. When you study the maps, ask a sheriff's deputy, policeman or rescue worker for help. They know the area better than you and can offer greater knowledge of the geography.

◆ Practice confined-area landings, not just in wooded places, but in urban areas, with low obstacles and hard-to-spot power lines.

◆ Meals went a long way in sustaining the crews. Even though locals were willing, it was hard for the helo crews in North Carolina to get something to eat. Provide coolers, box lunches, or make other arrangements.

◆ E-2s benefit from an area-fam brief by the local emergency services group, stressing the locations of hospitals, staging areas and other bits of important geographical information.

◆ All rescue aircraft should carry GPS or at least a working INS. Finding survivors was hard enough, but not being able to relay data points to incoming helicopter crews increased the difficulty.

◆ Everyone felt the E-2 was definitely required, even with other fixed-wing types all doing their utmost to sort things out. The E-2 was the only type that had a complete package of sensors–radar, IFF–as well as trained controllers to give directions to everyone. The Hummer's higher orbiting altitude made it more effective.

◆ This type of rescue mission is not conducted in a vacuum. There will always be commercial and general aviation aircraft going in and around the area. Only the E-2 is equipped to maintain the big picture and manage transient, stray, or superfluous planes, while also allowing other fixed-wing types like the C-130 to concentrate on managing the rescue.

It's interesting to note that when there was no C-130, the Hawkeye crews took over all responsibilities, integrating into the Air Force and National Guard C3 network, while maintaining close control on as many as 25 other aircraft.

*This section was developed with help from LCdr. Rick Sanford, VAW-78's operations officer and an NFO.–Ed.*

# Do What I Say

by Ltjg. Paul Kesler

After more than two and a half years of flight school I was finally sitting in a jet on an aircraft carrier. My EA-6B FRS class was taking its turn as backseat riders for a carrier-qualification detachment aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln*. As NFOs, we were excited about the opportunity to experience the essence of carrier aviation for the first time.

A couple of days before we left Whidbey Island, the FRS CQ instructor sat the five of us down to brief us on the various types of launches and recoveries, and what we could expect to see up on the flight deck. He emphasized flight-deck safety-know where to go and where not to go, keep close to the instructor, and know emergency procedures. He made one point several times: Before any airplane moved from its parking spot, all crew members would be completely strapped in, masks on, and visors down. No exceptions, period.

The first two days went well as I bagged a lot of traps. Better yet, all our new pilots were well on their way to qualifying. On the last afternoon, the LSOs were set to fly so they could make the fly-off that night. I ended up flying with two instructors from a land-based squadron who had been sent out for refresher training because they hadn't seen the boat in more than a year. Walking up to the aircraft, I knew it was going to be a long afternoon for me in the back seat because three pilots were going to be cycled through our jet.

We taxied out of the landing area after the second trap and parked the jet in front of the island for a hot-pump and crew switch. The plan was to switch the pilots first, then take our gas. After the jet was safely chocked and chained, I safed my ejection seat and unstrapped according to SOP for hot-refueling. The first pilot said something about dinner and that he would see us for midrats, then climbed out.

As our next pilot climbed up, I realized it was our instructor from the boat-safety lesson the week before. In my only other flight with this pilot, I had been singularly impressed with his failure to communicate his intentions with other members of the crew. I thought, "This ought to be interesting."

He jumped in the jet with only about another hour of sunlight left and still one more LSO waiting in the wings to use our aircraft. The perceived pressure to get done quickly is

PH2 James Watson

# Not What I Do

the only rationale I can think of for the following sequence of events.

Apparently, the pilot decided there was enough fuel for a quick run through the pattern without going below "hold-down" fuel. He decided to launch with the gas we had. However, he failed to tell the rest of the crew. Out came the chocks and chains. The crew received no warning from the pilot as we began to taxi toward cat 1.

As soon as I realized we were rolling, I set the record for attaching all six points of the ejection seat and strapping my mask to my face. What concerned me next was the vision of my pilot's shoulder-harness straps hanging unattached at the top of his seat. The taxi to cat 1 progressed as the takeoff checks were completed and everyone finished strapping into his seat.

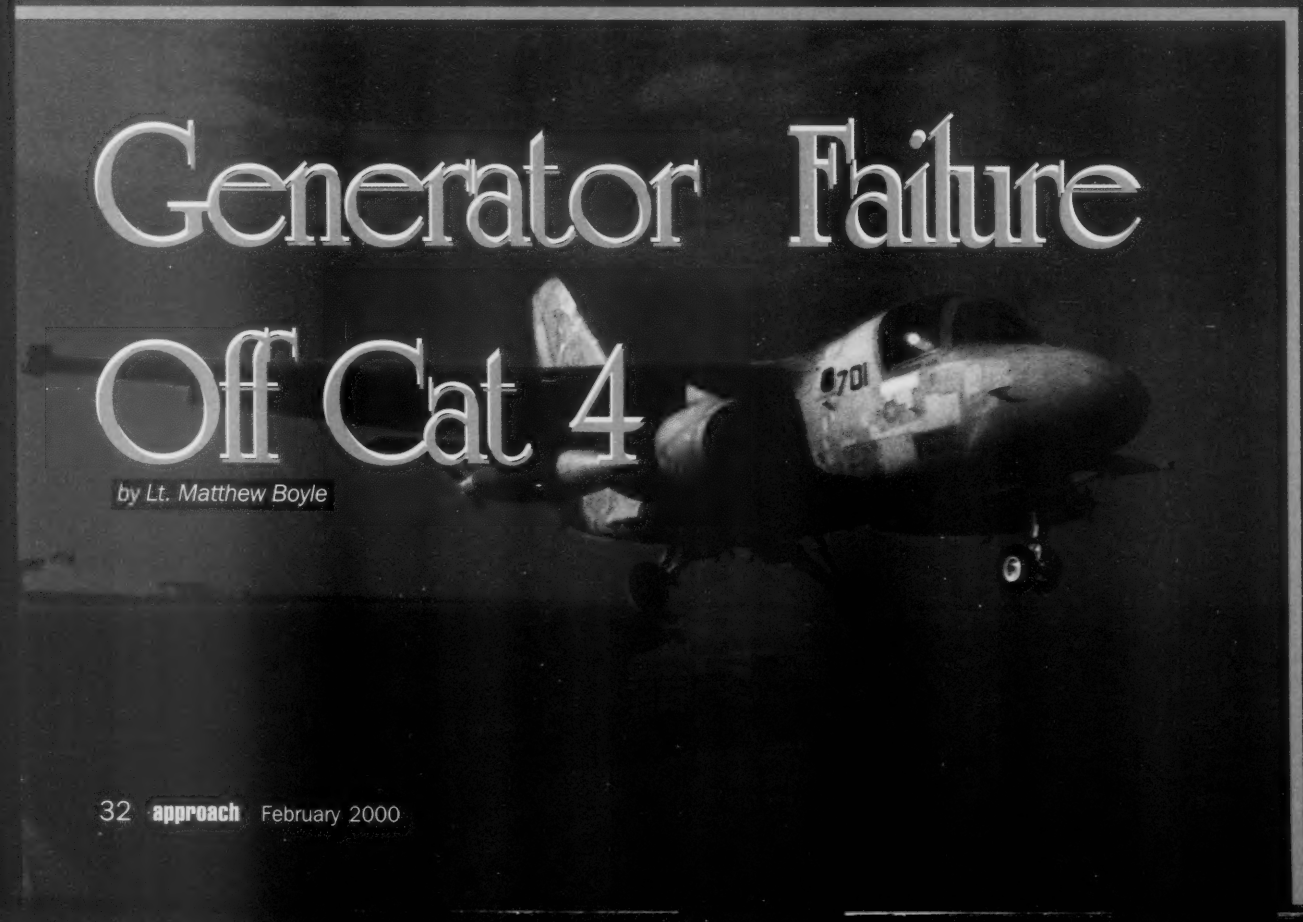
After the on-deck flail-ex, the flight actually went smoothly, without incident. At the end of the long flight, I climbed out of the jet and enjoyed the sunset, quite happy that it hadn't been my last. I made it back to the ready room for an all-NFO debrief. I was dumbfounded to learn that ECMO 1 had not been strapped in when the aircraft started to move, either. I wondered how he could have broken faith with his students so blatantly? I had listened intently to everything he had to say about CV operations and safety. I was dismayed to see him so cavalierly disregard his own lessons. The worst thing was that I never asked the pilot about what happened that afternoon. Anger initially kept me from approaching him on the subject. Eventually, one thing led to another, and I never spoke with him about it. Yes, it's bad enough that he put us in that situation, but I should have taken the initiative of telling him about it. Although my "rookie" analysis might have fallen on deaf ears, he would have heard it, and I would not feel as if I had failed to bring an important issue to light.

We debrief our flights so the aircrew can all sit down at 1 G and zero airspeed and talk about what happened (or didn't happen) during the flight. We never conducted a formal debrief that night, but I should have taken it upon myself to say something to him when we got home.

Ltjg. Kesler flies with VAQ-131.

# Generator Failure Off Cat 4

by Lt. Matthew Boyle



As a nugget, I should have known that it was going to be a bad night when rain started pouring as my rightseater and I began preflighting for the 0430 launch. We were one of two mission tankers for an F-14 section's long-range strike against our sister carrier at dawn. Oh, by the way, CAG and the Tomcat CO were in the two strike aircraft.

The other tanker launched first and headed outbound to the rendezvous point down PIM. The rain turned into a downpour turned into a driving rain as we taxied to cat 4 behind the E-2C on cat 3. Man, that Hawkeye disappeared quickly at the end of the stroke. I could tell there were going to be some nasty flight hours before the sun came up.

We finished the final checks, and everything looked normal as the aircraft went into tension and I wiped out the controls. Tapes, gauges, lights, ready to go. I turned on the lights and waited for the shooter to send us out into the blackness.

The initial jolt of the cat shot was pretty hefty, and it was a good stroke...that is, until we got airborne. As we lifted off the deck, I began to go through my habitual rotation scan. The big problem wasn't that my scan had been broken; the difficulty was that I couldn't see anything. The cockpit had gone completely black!

My first thought was, "Wow, it's dark." Then, I pulled back on the stick and hoped we were climbing away from the water. I set what I thought was a good pull, and then my throttle hand went immediately to my boom microphone to activate my lip light. Yeah, the one I had briefed I would leave on during the launch. The immediate illumination of the instruments was very comforting. The first thing I saw was the needle on the AOA gauge indicating 16 units. Next, I looked at the altimeter and saw we were climbing away from the water passing through 200 feet. The cockpit was still black.

At about 350 feet, the lights came back on as the number two generator picked up the load. I immediately reverted back to my normal takeoff scan and procedures. I raised the gear and felt reassured as the VSI slowly increased and we climbed away from the water, at an even faster rate.

Climbing through 800 feet, I noticed that the primary attitude source was indicating about 35 degrees nose-up and about 20 degrees left bank. With no visible horizon, I knew that I didn't want to be in a turn, and I normally only hold 10 to 15 degrees nose up on the climb. I slowly started to ease the pull and level my wings. Things were going better now, or so I thought.

As I continued with my scan, I noticed the VSI at a negative 500-fpm descent and sure enough, the altimeter

showed us descending back through 800 feet. Great! Both of us now realized that something was wrong as my COTAC called, "Check your standby."

Now I was flying off the standby gyro at 800 feet, no horizon whatsoever, and the first thing we heard on the radio was, "Ninety-nine, mother is in Thunderstorm Condition Two". Things were getting better and better. I knew the first priority was to get as far away from the water as I could, so I just held the flaps in the takeoff position and climbed out on the standby gyro at 150 knots. I had always briefed that with any kind of emergency off the cat, my plan would be to climb through 1,000 feet or whatever layer might be there. When the lights came on, we saw that the number one generator was dropping off-line, and the number two had failed to pick up the load immediately. Once we were safely climbing, the COTAC began to go through the memory items and tried resetting the number one generator, without success.

The next step was to fire up the APU, so we wouldn't once again be left in the dark if the number two generator dropped the load.

We notified departure of our emergency and they immediately countered with a request to state our intentions. My only intention was to find a nice, comfortable VMC altitude, level off there, and gain time to think about our situation. After reaching a clear pocket at 8,000 feet, we were headed back toward the ship, level, at 250 knots.

There were some big buildups, and we were still going in and out of clouds overhead mother at 8,000 feet. At this point, the COTAC was working on getting us a solid attitude reference, but was having no luck. Our TACAN was working, so at least we knew where the ship was. I wasn't thrilled about the prospect of penetrating back through the overcast, in "Thunder II," on a standby gyro that could give out at anytime.

I'm sure my COTAC was doing some quick risk management since he was flying with the newest pilot in the squadron. We did have our other mission tanker airborne, and departure had already asked if we would like them to join on us. Flying night form was much more appealing than using the standby gyro to get back down, so we had departure give them an RTB call and bring them back our way. They were 50 miles away and headed out on their mission, but we needed their help and the strike package wouldn't launch for another 30 minutes.

A few minutes later, we saw their lights coming to join on us. They joined up nicely in the clear pocket we had found, and we gladly passed them the lead. Now all we had to do was follow them down for the section approach.

We knew there was a lot of weather below us, and I confessed that I was fighting the leans a little bit. I recommended to the COTAC that we should dirty up at altitude while we were still VMC. We passed this on to lead, who then told approach of our intentions. Once we were both dirty, it was all a matter of flying good form, not losing sight, and landing on the boat (which, of course, was calling winds of more than 35 knots).

We started our descent to 1,200 feet for a long straight-in. We were VMC upon reaching that altitude, a nice change to our streak of bad luck that night. Finally, the lights of the ship were starting to break out at 4 miles. I think it's the first time seeing those lights has ever been relaxing.

At three-quarters of a mile, with a ball on the lens, our lead kissed us off and I flew a full high, full fast, chase line-up all the way approach for the OK 3-wire.

Fly what you brief. I had a lip light on my helmet for about a month, and I always brief that I'll turn it on before a night cat shot. I actually only did it about half the time before that night. It didn't take long for me to turn it on,

When the lights came on, we saw that the number one generator was dropping off-line, and the number two had failed to pick up the load immediately.

but it would have been one less thing to worry about as we were flying away. It also would have lit up the cockpit much sooner, and we wouldn't have had those few seconds of pitch black, wondering if we were headed for the water.

Next, always cross-check your instruments. If I had trusted my main gyro once we got power back, we'd have flown into the water. I also learned to assess the situation and not be afraid to take charge of it. We easily could have decided not to bring our playmate back so that he could do his mission. This would have put us in a partial-panel situation, in bad weather, on a very nasty night.

After we recovered, our squadron representative in CATCC brought up the option of staying overhead until the sun came up an hour and a half later. We decided it was better to break the chain of events that had been rapidly building and get down as soon as possible because the standby gyro was the only reliable instrument we had. Also, thinking ahead and dirtying up on top really helped make the approach easier.

The last thing I learned that night was to practice things like section approaches whenever you can. It's one thing to do it at the field and another to do it for real at the boat. I sure never expected to be doing one that night.

Lt. Boyle flies with VS-38.

# BROWNSHOES IN ACTION COMIX

"The Kind real aviators like"
by Cdr. Ward Carroll

## One Day at a CVX Planning Conference...

It needs enhanced power projection capabilities from the Littorals...
It should have network-centric architecture...
It demands multi-role flexibility...
It must capitalize on technology to reduce manpower requirements...
...and have the ability to launch and recover at any time without the requirementfor a respot...
We must have high-definition television with 10 premium movie channels mounted over each rack...
Hot tubs in every stateroom!
A driving range in the hangar bay!
Jet skis instead of P-Boats!
All right, you guys... Break's over. Let's get back to the meeting. And no more coffee!